

Draft Implementation Plan for Stage 1 Actions, Lower Sacramento River, North Delta Region Bundle (North Delta Regional Plan)

***CALFED's Vision for the North Delta:
"Provide a Coordinated Regional Solution to
Ecosystem, Watershed, Water Quality, Water Supply
Reliability, and Flood Control Concerns in the
North Delta Region"***

INTRODUCTION

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is a cooperative interagency effort of 15 state and federal agencies with management or regulatory responsibilities for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Bay-Delta) system. The mission of the Program is to develop a long-term comprehensive plan for restoring ecological health and improving water management for beneficial uses of the Bay-Delta system. Phase II of the Program, the programmatic planning phase, is currently nearing completion; this phase will culminate with the release of a Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (PEIR/EIS) and a Record of Decision. Completion of Phase II will set the stage for Program implementation, which will require preparing project-specific environmental documentation tiered off the PEIR/EIS for discrete sets of related actions.

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is composed of eight program elements:

- Ecosystem Restoration Program
- Water Quality Program
- Levee System Integrity Program
- Water Use Efficiency Program
- Water Transfers Program
- Watershed Program
- Storage and
- Conveyance

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Implementation of the actions contained in each program element will be guided by a program implementation plan. These plans will focus on the early years of implementation for which needed actions are most easily identified, but will also reflect a long-term vision for continuing implementation over the next several decades. Implementation will take place in stages. This

approach allows for periodic assessment of the success and balance of the overall CALFED Bay-Delta Program and provides opportunities to alter direction and focus as necessary.

Stage 1 of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program implementation is expected to last about 7 years. Stage 1 consists of actions that have been proposed based on extensive participation by CALFED agencies and stakeholders. Descriptions of these actions were first circulated for broad public review and comment as part of the Revised Phase II Report, issued December 18, 1998.

Stage 1 actions were grouped into "bundles" for the purposes of achieving regional and programmatic balance; developing environmental documentation; establishing assurances; and facilitating financing, permitting, and implementation. The proposed bundles have been available for public review and comment since March 1999 through the Bay-Delta Advisory Council (BDAC), through CALFED's web site, and as part of the Draft PEIR/EIS released for public review and comment in June 1999.

To expedite implementation, it has been necessary to initiate the project-specific planning process well ahead of the completion of Phase II of the Program. Appropriate agency staffing, budgeting, and other resources need to be identified and allocated, and formal environmental documentation needs to be initiated for the highest priority actions. This document presents CALFED's approach to the project-specific planning process for one of its seven bundles of actions, the Lower Sacramento River, North Delta Region Bundle.

The Lower Sacramento River, North Delta Region Bundle is intended to provide benefits for several CALFED programs, including the Ecosystem Restoration Program, the Levee System Integrity Program, and the Water Quality Program, and to improve the conveyance of water through the Delta. The CALFED staff members responsible for implementing the Lower Sacramento River, North Delta Region Bundle coordinate their efforts with these other CALFED efforts to ensure that the actions in the bundle are implemented in a manner consistent with them.

DESCRIPTION

The Lower Sacramento River, North Delta Region Bundle (referred to in this document as the North Delta Regional Plan) consists of four actions to address concerns about flood control, ecosystem quality (including fisheries), water quality, and water supply reliability for the lower Sacramento River and north Delta region. The North Delta Regional Plan is described in detail in the "White Paper on North Delta Improvements – CALFED Bay-Delta Program". This report summarizes the information provided in the White Paper.

As shown in Figure 1, the Lower Sacramento River, North Delta Region Bundle Project Area is the area within which CALFED anticipates implementing actions under this bundle. The North Delta Regional Plan study area encompasses a larger area that includes the watershed of the Cosumnes River from Highway 16 to the confluence with the Mokelumne River, the watershed

of the Mokelumne River from Camanche Reservoir to the San Joaquin River, and the watershed of the Morrison Creek stream group in Sacramento County.

CALFED will play two roles in the north Delta. The first role is to implement its North Delta Improvements. Four actions are planned for implementation in Stage 1 of the CALFED Program to fulfill this role:

1. implementing various potential flood control improvements, such as dredging and setback levees, along the north and south forks of the Mokelumne River;
2. undertaking actions on McCormack-Williamson Tract to provide flood control and habitat restoration benefits;
3. restoring habitat along Georgiana Slough to create wildlife and fisheries habitat; and
4. conducting a study of the feasibility of constructing a 0- to 4,000-cfs screened diversion on the Sacramento River at Hood and modifying operating rules for the Delta Cross Channel (DCC).

More detailed descriptions of each of these actions are provided in Appendix A.

CALFED's second role in the north Delta is to coordinate its activities with other Cosumnes and Mokelumne River restoration and flood control projects through the Mokelumne-Cosumnes Watershed Alliance (MCWA). A more detailed description of this role is provided in Appendix B.

IMPLEMENTATION

The purpose of this document is to advance the early implementation planning process for the North Delta Regional Plan. This purpose is achieved by recommending an approach to organizing actions into specific projects and defining their geographic and topical scope, proposing implementation responsibilities for the various CALFED agencies and stakeholder groups, identifying funding requirements, and laying out proposed implementation schedules. At this early stage in the planning process, some details regarding the North Delta Regional Plan have not yet been developed. Therefore, this document will continue to be modified as this additional information becomes available. It is anticipated that this document will be revised on a quarterly basis until the EIR/EIS process is formally initiated.

Organization and Responsibilities

Figure 2 provides an overview of the organizational structure for implementing the North Delta Regional Plan. More detail on the organizational structure is provided below in the descriptions provided for each action. As shown in Figure 2, three of the actions are considered a single project and are intended to be implemented together. This project will be analyzed in a project-level EIR/EIS tiered from the final CALFED PEIS/EIR. The fourth action is a feasibility study that does not require environmental documentation at this time.

Implementation of the first three actions will be undertaken by CALFED. The CALFED Policy Group (CALFED agency heads) and the Bay-Delta Advisory Committee (BDAC) (CALFED stakeholders) will provide large-scale policy direction. The North Delta Improvements Group (NDIG)(agency staff members and north Delta area stakeholders) assisted CALFED in preparing the White Paper that served as the starting point for defining north Delta flood control improvement alternatives. The NDIG will continue providing guidance in the formulation of detailed alternatives. A team of agency staff members and consultants will support CALFED staff members in the planning and design of the project and in preparing environmental documents, permit applications, and bid specifications.

A permit review team is being assembled to provide guidance for the actions to be evaluated in an EIR/EIS (Actions 1-3). The Regulatory Review Team, whose proposed membership is listed in the following table, will provide a forum for staff members from regulatory agencies to influence project design and analysis methods. The Regulatory Review Team will enhance coordination among regulatory agencies with permit authority over implementation actions in the North Delta Regional Plan. Formation of this team is intended to facilitate permit processing, provide consistent review and mitigation requirements for all North Delta Regional Plan actions, and minimize conflicts between requirements imposed by various regulatory agencies.

Proposed Membership of the Regulatory Review Team

Agency	Member
California Department of Fish and Game	Frank Wernette
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	to be determined
National Marine Fisheries Service	Elizabeth Campbell
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board	Donna Podger
Reclamation Board	Ricardo Pineda
State Lands Commission	Diane Jones
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Regulatory Branch	Tom Coe
Natural Resources Conservation Service	Luana Kiger

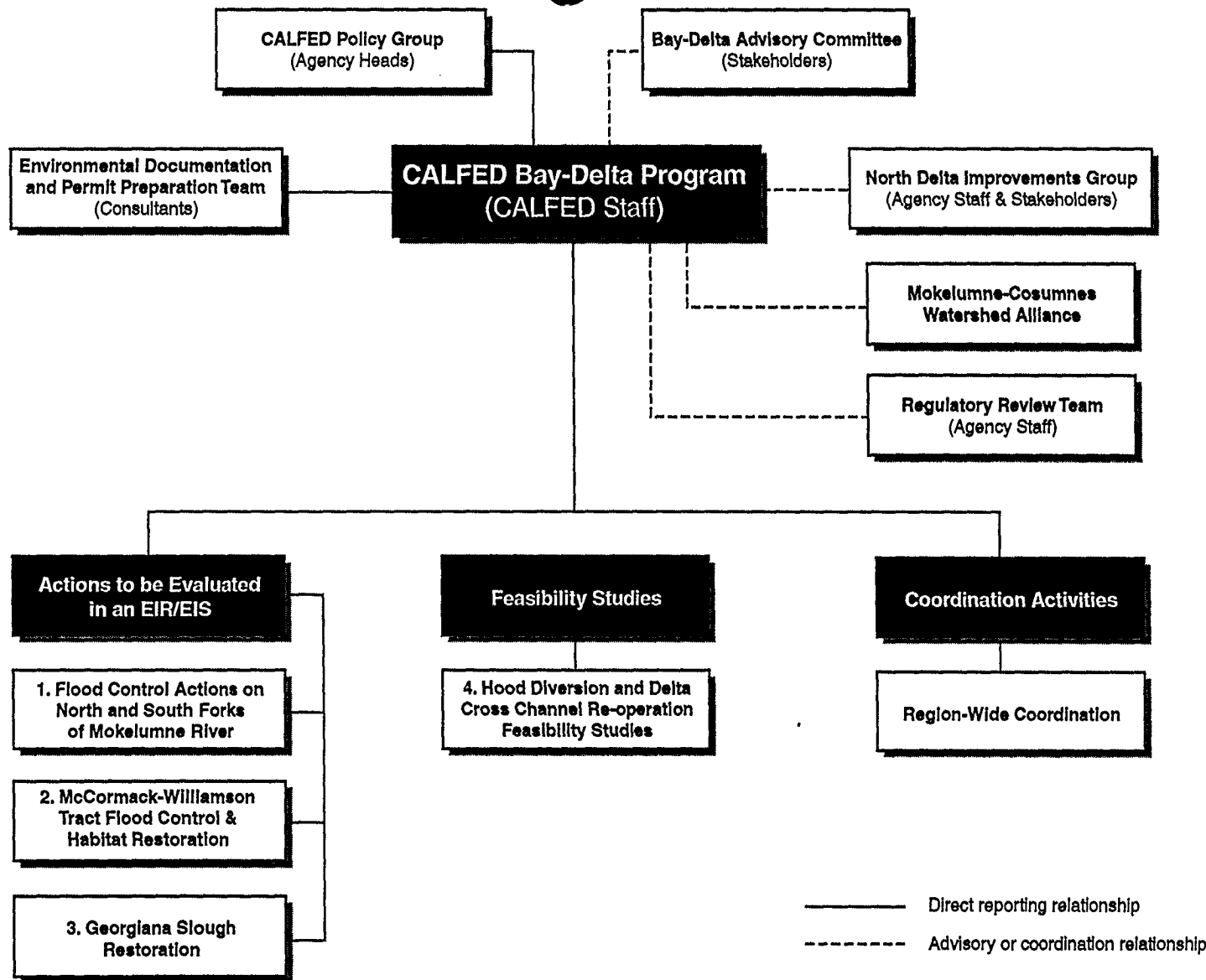


Figure 3 shows the staff-level organization for the implementation of the first four actions. Figure 4 shows an overview of the implementation schedule for the entire bundle of actions.

The proposed grouping of actions into discrete projects reflects consideration of project purposes, the expertise and statutory mandates of the various CALFED and local agencies, and the need to create manageable project teams. There is no one correct way to organize this work, and it is anticipated that the scope and structure of the proposed actions will be modified as detailed planning in close coordination with the affected agencies and stakeholders gets underway.

LINKAGES

CALFED recognizes the great importance of maintaining close coordination and linkages between its various actions to ensure balance, efficiency, and harmony between various interest groups. By proposing to implement Program actions as a series of discrete projects rather than a single comprehensive project, CALFED risks losing the very coordination and linkages so important to overall success. At the same time, it is clear from a practical standpoint that project-level planning must be divided into manageable units to move forward. Therefore, while striking this balance between very large integrated projects and smaller discrete projects, CALFED must give a great deal of attention to establishing and maintaining appropriate linkages between individual projects.

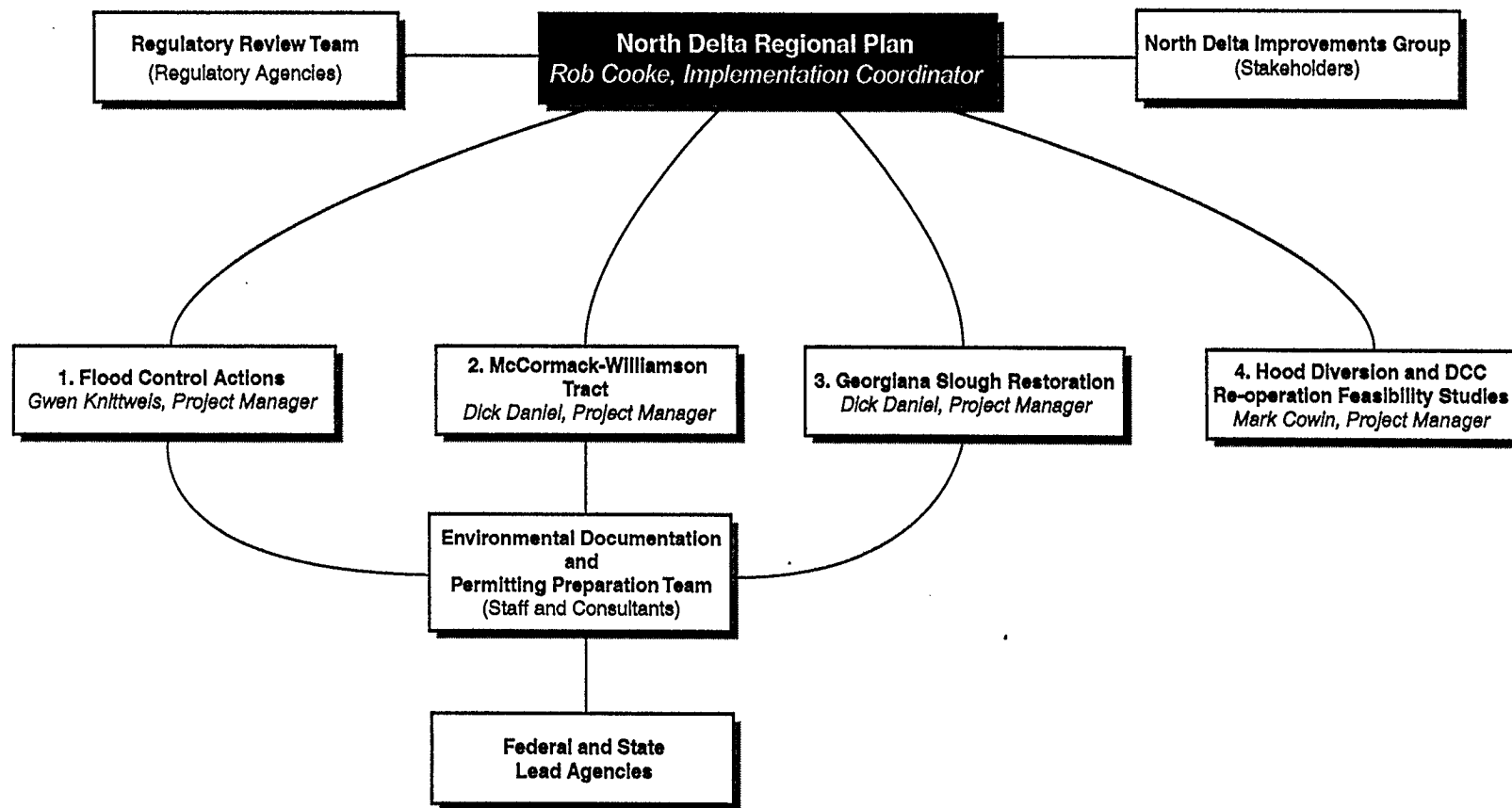
Some of the required linkages are already in place as part of the interim Program structure. CALFED Policy Group meetings, BDAC meetings, and stakeholder/agency meetings provide useful forums for communication about and coordination on implementation issues. The current budget processes, including budgeting at the federal, state, and local levels, provide further opportunities for coordination and negotiation to achieve a reasonable balance between competing priorities. In addition, existing laws and regulations provide a framework for agency decisions that can provide strong linkages expressed in the context of permit decisions and other actions.

However, additional linkage and assurance mechanisms need to be carefully considered on a case-by-case basis to assure all agencies and stakeholders that the appropriate balance and coordination will be achieved. Potential additional linkage mechanisms under consideration include contracts, legislation (including bond measures), interagency agreements, and agency directives. CALFED is committed to exploring and implementing the appropriate linkage mechanisms to ensure Program integration as implementation proceeds.

Additional information regarding coordination activities related to each of the Lower Sacramento River, North Delta Region Bundle actions is provided in Appendix A and B.

COST ESTIMATE

Preliminary cost estimates have not yet been prepared for the actions in the North Delta Regional Plan. These will be provided at a later time.



Task Name	2000				2001				2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
	1st Q	2nd Q	3rd Q	4th Q	1st Q	2nd Q	3rd Q	4th Q						
CALFED Record of Decision														
Actions 1-3: Flood Control, M-W Tract, Georgiana														
Project planning														
Environmental documents and permitting:														
Scoping														
EIR/EIS														
Permitting														
Implementation														
Action 4: Feasibility Study of Hood Diversion, DCC														
Action 5: MCWA Coordination														